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TITLE OF THESIS/TITRE DE LA THÈSE The self-concepts of female athletes: an explanatory
study of role strain in intercollegiate athletics.

UNIVERSITY/UNIVERSITÉ University of Windsor, Windsor, Ontario

DEGREE FOR WHICH THESIS WAS PRESENTED /
GRADE POUR LEQUEL CETTE THÈSE FUT PRÉSENTÉE M.A.

YEAR THIS DEGREE CONFERRED/ANNÉE D'OBTENTION DE CE DEGRÉ 1977

NAME OF SUPERVISOR/NOM DU DIRECTEUR DE THÈSE Dr. J. Ferguson

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THE SELF-CONCEPTS OF FEMALE ATHLETES:
AN EXPLANATORY STUDY OF ROLE STRAIN IN
INTERCOLLEGIATE ATHLETICS

by

Mary Catherine Breen

A Thesis
submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
through the Department of
Sociology and Anthropology in Partial Fulfillment
of the requirements for the Degree
of Master of Arts at
The University of Windsor

Windsor, Ontario, Canada

1977



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ABSTRACT

Athletes can have either an amateur status which is without pay; or professional status which is with pay. Also, individuals can participate for recreational purposes with no competition or monies involved. Athletics at the amateur or professional level is a highly competitive field which has been dominated by males as far back as 2000 B.C.

The purpose of this research was to describe and explore evidence of how women presently involved in inter-collegiate athletics have been socialized into their team and individual athletic role. The investigation focused on the role-learning of women athletes and the role strain which resulted from the two non-complementary roles, the feminine role and the athletic role. The effects of the role strain upon women athletes' self-concept concluded the study.

The observations were made by personally interviewing twenty women athletes and recording their responses to an interview schedule. The interview schedule followed the socialization into athletics in a chronological fashion and at the same time asked relevant questions about the self-concept. Specific questions were asked to explore the socio-psychological concepts of socialization, role models, role learning, opportunity structure, role strain and the sociological self-concept.

Family socialization was a significant concept for describing how women athletes were socialized into their

specific athletic role, team and/or individual. In all but two cases, all members of the family were involved in athletics. Thus, parental and sibling athletic involvement were important influences in childhood socialization.

A further significant factor was the father's influence on the type of sport women athletes had undertaken at an early age. Eleven out of twenty had undertaken the same type of sport as their fathers, demonstrating that an opportunity structure was available within the family. Parents and siblings provided positive reinforcement and example, therefore encouraging participation in athletics previous to school.

The two variables, sex of the siblings and size of the family, had no significance in regard to the type of athletic involvement women athletes chose. Ordinal position was significant, however, in the type of athletics undertaken. Eleven of the twenty athletes were first-born and chose team athletics, whereas later-born chose individual athletics.

In exploring role strain only two out of the twenty women athletes reported that they had experienced it. The two students were in their programs of study longer and had more experience--thus making them more aware of the role strain realized that there were differing expectations in their two roles. Their social role demanded submissive and passive behaviour whereas the athletic role demanded independent, aggressive behaviour.

Although role strain was difficult to assess, reduction

of it was an important aspect of this investigation. The two aware athletes used the method of compartmentalization defined by Goode (1960) as walling themselves off from the conflicting social role while involved in a particular social situation. They were aware of the inconsistency of expectations and this is how they reduced their role strain. A large majority of the women athletes were unaware of role strain, however, and used the mechanism of "Blocking Out", in which they ignored the problem of role strain completely.

The effects of role strain on the self-concept were difficult to assess because of the lack of awareness. In most cases, the women athletes were unaware of the existence of role strain, and felt they had well-rounded social lives and positive self-concepts.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The completion of this thesis was possible only with the patience, valuable criticism and generous assistance of my chairperson, Dr. J. Ferguson. I would also like to gratefully acknowledge Dr. M.L. Dietz and Dr. W. Romanow for their evaluation and helpful suggestions.

The assistance of the Human Kinetics Department at the University of Windsor was also greatly appreciated. The data would have not been collected without the women athletes involved in intercollegiate athletics at the University of Windsor who voluntarily agreed to be interviewed and assist in the completion of this thesis.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the interest and assistance of the secretaries of the Sociology and Anthropology Departments at the University of Windsor, throughout my undergraduate and graduate years.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

1. Definition of the Problem

This research has been directed to how women have been socialized into the athletic role and, more/ specifically, how a sample of women athletes at the University of Windsor have been socialized into their roles as individual and team competitors. It would appear that the adoption of the athletic role has higher salience for men than women, and indeed, athletic roles are frequently considered as masculine roles that threaten the femininity of women athletes, (Hall, 1973:6). If the athletic role is culturally defined in masculine terms, the women athlete must be exposed to the possibility of role strain between the feminine role and the athletic role. If role strain occurs, the woman athlete may or may not acknowledge it and this depends on her level of awareness. Whether women acknowledge the role strain or not, there are various mechanisms they use to reduce role strain to keep their role system in balance.

The self-concept which emerges in the development and process of socialization must, to some degree, be affected by this role strain between the feminine and athletic roles, depending upon the degree to which it is acknowledged by the individual: that is his/her awareness of role strain. Self-concept refers to what an individual thinks she is and what unique traits he/she believes himself to possess at any point in time (Webster, Sobieszek, 1974:7). A

considerable part of this research was devoted to an examination of the present attitudes the women athletes hold about themselves and their consequent behaviour. The self-concept is also a product of the socialization experience, however, and so attention is also paid to the process of socialization from childhood experience in the family, through the school years into university.

2. Perspectives on Athletics

Although athletics have been a religious duty in some societies of the past, and in others a preparation for war, in our society they would appear both to preserve a level of physical fitness and to serve as mass entertainment. Preparation for athletics is initiated by our formal education system.

Athletics as a career differs from most other occupations. The level of competition is very intense, and those who are unable to meet a high level of performance are usually unable to earn their living in competitive athletics. There are very few other occupations, if any, which prevent all but an elite from participating in them. The professional athlete reaps very large monetary and prestigious rewards, but the duration of his/her career is limited to about fifteen years on the average.

A distinction has been drawn here and in what follows between competitive athletics as a career, and athletics as recreation. One may spend a considerable amount of time at sailing or golfing, but unless there is regular involvement in competition, and the activity is not secondary to

another occupational role, it would be considered a recreational activity.

A. Athletics in Early Egypt

The wall paintings on the 38th parallel between Cairo and Luxor at Beni-Hassan dating from 2000 B.C. show hundreds of wrestling scenes. These wrestling groups must have been part of the soldiers training, (Gardiner, 1965:7) as they are always associated with other military exercises such as shooting with the bow or sham fights. In other wall paintings at Beni-Hassan we see women bending backwards until they touch the ground, preparing to turn a series of somersaults, (Gardiner, 1965:6). Ball games are also depicted at Beni-Hassan, and again, most of the participants appear to be women.

B. Athletics in Homer

It is in Homer about the 12th Century B.C. that we first find expressed the true spirit of sport: the desire to be the best and to excel over all other men, the joy in the effort and the highest honour awarded in victory, (Gardiner, 1965:18).

Athletics in Homeric Greece were part of daily life and were purely secular. Any important occasion would be a natural excuse for holding sports, whether it was the gathering of an army for war, a wedding, or the funeral of some chieftain. When people gathered together, something had to be done to entertain them and the most natural form of entertainment was some form of competition.

Gardiner (1965:2) stipulates that a certain atmosphere

is necessary for the athletic spirit to flourish. Where conditions are too soft, luxurious, or, on the other hand too hard, and all the physical energies are exhausted in a constant struggle with forces of man or nature, athletics cannot exist.

Sport arose naturally in those societies where the power was in the hands of an aristocracy which depended on military skill and physical strength itself, (Gardiner, 1965:2). Homeric athletics were like the Homeric society itself. Only aristocrats and chieftains could compete at principal events, the chariot-race, boxing and wrestling which were monopolized by the nobles.

Homeric athletics were informal and spontaneous and there was no organized training and this may have been because conditions of social life were too fluid for the growth of organized athletics, (Gardiner, 1965:20).

Homeric Achaeans used athletics as a diversion from war in that athletics kept the men fit if they were called to war. The beauty and thrill of athletic contests were also appealing. The tradition and development of athletics by the later Greeks was inherited from the Homeric Achaeans.

Basically, the body of Greek writing devoted specifically to athletics is small, (Harris, 1966:28). Athletics in Greek times allowed people who enjoyed competition to be a participant and still train for warfare as they could be called at any time to take the field and fight. Thus, preparation for warfare was one very important factor in explaining the Greeks involvement in athletics.

The training consisted of carrying heavy loads, lifting weights, bending iron rods, striking at a suspended leather sack filled with sand or flour. Boxers delved the ground to strengthen their upper limbs.

The Olympic festival according to Gardiner (1965) is the event which tells us the most about athletics in Greek times.

C. The Olympian Games

These were the most famous of the four great national festivals of the ancient Greeks, the other three being the Isthmian, Pythian, and the Nemean games. The Olympic Games started in 776 B.C. and ended in 394 A.D. when they were abolished by the Roman Emperor Theodosius I, (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1975: 274).

The Olympian games were celebrated every four years in the sanctuary of Zeus at Olympia, in the western part of Greece; the time of the festival varied from the beginning of August to the middle of September. At first the athletic contests occupied only a single day, but in later times five or six days were required to present all of the sport attractions.

The origin of the games goes back to antiquity (Gardiner, 1965:59). The official list of victors in the athletic competition began in the year 776 B.C., (Gardiner, 1965:151). The earliest, and for a long time the only, contest was a short distance foot race, with a course of about 630 feet. In 724 B.C., a long race was instituted. Also at this time, the contestants discarded their loin-

cloths and appeared naked, a custom that prevailed from then on. In 709 B.C., both wrestling and the pentathlon (in which each athlete participated in five different events, such as throwing the discus and the javelin, foot racing, jumping and wrestling) were introduced; then in 688 B.C. came boxing, and in 680 B.C. the race for four-horse chariots were introduced. Contests for boys were established in 632 B.C. with separate events of boxing, wrestling, and running and in 520 B.C., the foot race for men in armour was added, (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1975: 275-276).

The only prize at the Olympian Games was a crown of wild olive or a wreath of leaves. Whatever the origin of this custom of rewarding the victor with no other prize than a wreath of leaves or a crown of olive has set an example of athletic purity which has had an important influence on Greek athletics, (Gardiner, 1965:36).

In the early centuries, the participants in the Olympia Games were drawn from the wealthier classes. They along had the leisure to train and they also could afford to travel to the meetings.

When Greece lost her independence to Rome in the middle of the 2nd Century B.C., the support for competitors at Olympia fell off.

D. Athletics in Rome

Roman citizens were not encouraged to compete at athletics. Instead, lower class members were recruited to provide entertainment in the arena and to participate for

their livelihood. While there had been only a small element of professionalism in Greek athletics, during the Roman period, athletics became not only professionalized, but commercialized.

Rome fell in the 5th Century and the information on athletics after this time period is thinly documented. All records show is that in the Middle Ages religious festivals were often the scent of primitive games between town and guild (Harris, 1972:181), and on holy days and holidays, sporting matches and contests took place.

It seems that from this time, organized athletics went out of favour until the Norman Conquest of England in 1066 when the tournament gained wide popularity among wealthier classes, and archery was the sport of the common people, (Funk & Wagnalls, 1969:416).

The first recorded organized athletics occurred in English universities in 1850, (Funk & Wagnalls, 1969). In America in 1870 there was revival of interest in athletics and in 1873 at Saratoga the first intercollegiate athletic meeting took place (Funk & Wagnalls, 1969:416). The Amateur Athletic Association, which controls all athletics in America, and is allied with the Canadian Amateur Athletic Association, was formed in 1880.

In 1896 The Olympics were revived. The Olympic Games designation applied to international athletic competition held every four years and was restricted to amateurs. The basic feature of the Olympic's policy has been that amateur athletes of all nations are eligible to participate.

Some significant developments have occurred since the first Olympic Games in 776 B.C. There has been a marked increase in Olympic competition among women, since 1924. There has been a steady increase in the number of sports and events open to competition at the Olympic Games. Winter sports such as hockey, figure-skating and skiing became part of the Olympic program in 1924. The summer games now have a total of 22 sports, (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1975: 278). The performances have been superior and the winning times have improved significantly. In 1896 the hundred meter run was done in twelve seconds and in 1968 the same distance was completed in 9.9 seconds, (Encyclopedia Britannica, 1975:279).

Another very important aspect of the history of athletics was the involvement of women in athletics. Harris, (1972:40) says that the cause of the growth in women's athletics, which appears to have taken place at about the beginning of the Christian era was the development of sport as entertainment for spectators and the desire to produce something to titillate the fancy of the crowds.

According to Harris (1966) the evidence for women's athletics is even scantier than for men. The whole of our knowledge depends on the following information.

Pausanias, describing the temple of Hera at Olympia, writes:

Once every four years the women of the Committee of Sixteen weave a robe for the statue of Hera, and they also arrange for Heraean festival. This consisted of races for married girls. They

are not all the same age; the youngest run first, then those of the second age group and finally, the oldest girls.

This is how they compete; their hair hangs loose and they wear tunics reaching to little above the knee with right shoulder bare as far as the breast. Like the men, they have the Olympic stadium reserved to them for these Games, but the stade is shortened for their races by about a sixty. To the victors they give olive wreaths and share a sacrifice beef to Hera and they are allowed to erect statues of themselves with inscriptions. The attendants who help the sixteen to run these Games are women, (Harris 1966:179).

Although women victors were allowed to erect their own statue no inscription relating to women has been found in Olympia, although records of women who entered winning chariots for the equestrian events there have been discovered, (Harris 1966:180).

The most compelling piece of evidence is an inscription which is dated in the 1st Century A.D. which reveals the existence of a meeting for women on the mainland to compete in athletics.

Women were given standards of dress and not allowed to race any great distance. Their athletic program suggested that girls over thirteen years of age who were running should wear appropriate dress, and that the tunic was to be worn, (Harris, 1966:180).

In the 2nd Century A.D. at Olympic Games in Antioch girls competed in wrestling, running, dressed in shorts (Harris, 1972:41). In the 4th Century A.D., mosaics at Piazza Armerina in Sicily support the belief that women's athletics in the Roman period had more to do with public

entertainment than with sport proper (Harris, 1972:41).

After the fall of Rome in the 5th Century, little is known about organized athletics, either for men or women.

In the Victorian era, women's sports were pasttimes and consisted largely of croquet but later tennis and archery brought them out of their stuffy living rooms and parlours (Betts, 1974:218). At this time women were very restricted in their activities because of the social values of the period. Women skated or took long walks in the woods but would never risk the social sin of being seen at prize fights or where they could be offended by the rough language of players (Harris, 1972:219). By 1870 women skated, by 1890 they golfed, by 1896 they cycled, and in 1900 they were engaged in basketball, baseball, rowing, winter sports, and aquatic carnivals in college (Harris, 1972:219).

Even in the early part of the 19th Century, athletics were restricted to the rich. Therefore, if women were attending college their chances of being able to participate were greater because of the facilities.

At the turn of the century, certain changes were noticed. In the early 1900's, women who golfed were forced to wear skirts that touched the top of their high shoes and newspapers ridiculed the bloomer costume (Betts, 1974:200).

Women's attendance at Men's athletic events as spectators was a beginning in the breakdown of the Victorian

prejudices against women in sports.

E. The Modern Period

World War I brought about a significant change in American social attitudes. The greatest influence affecting women most directly was the right to vote. This brought about greater equality for women. There was an increase in the number of women in industry and colleges, all brought about by the war, prosperity, and suffrage. The coincident rise of women in labour unions and labour legislation increased the amount of leisure time available (Gerber, 1974:19). Rather than be confined to their homes when they were not working, many women chose sport as a diversion. Large numbers of women played basketball, volleyball and softball. Participants were no longer drawn primarily from the upper class, but the upper class still took part in the more expensive activities that required special facilities while the working women enjoyed basketball, bowling and baseball sponsored by industries, municipal recreation departments, and agencies, (Gerber, 1974:6). That decade also produced genuine sport heroines such as Amelia Earhart, who was the first woman to fly across the Atlantic Ocean in 1928, and Mildred "Babe" Didrikson, who excelled in the 1932 Olympics (Gerber, 1974:19).

The new feminism born in the 1960's was a movement revolutionizing social attitudes, which Friedan (1963) describes in her book, The Feminine Mystique.

The changes that have taken place in athletics for women during the 1960's and 1970's are, in part, a direct result of the social changes brought by the new attitudes of and toward women and their roles (Gerber, 1974:23).

Women are now more involved in new activities such as motorcycle racing, the martial arts, parachuting, non-tackle football, cross-country skiing, and marathon running, and surfing.

The growth of organized competition continues to expand at a rapid rate with regional, national and international competition available in an even greater variety of athletics. The biggest change in comparison to any other era in history is the fact that more women are involved in athletics in the 20th Century than ever before in history.

3. Women's Roles in Society

The systematic, lifelong program of socialization to which both sexes are subjected is so effective and continues that many are unaware of the extent to which it has shaped their thinking about themselves and their aspirations as well as their view and expectations of persons of the opposite sex (Greenglass, 1976:14). A woman's socialization is directed towards encouraging her not to develop her own potential or individuality but rather to live through others, preferably her husband and children. Such role expectations are not so obvious in early childhood but are crucial in the socialization process at the adolescent stage and from there on.

In early childhood we admire the spirit and activity of little girls. We encourage them to run and to compete with boys, who are their equals until puberty. Then suddenly at different ages for different women we say, "When are you going to grow up and be a lady?" (Lipsyte, 1969:23)

Although girls are characteristically high achievers in grade school, there is a significant change by their high school years. In adolescence, the establishment of successful interpersonal relationships becomes the self-defining, most rewarding achievement task (Coelmen, 1961: 113). Girls who conform learn to take pleasure in their physical femininity and develop the proper psychological "femininity", (Bardwick, 1972:54). It is during the high school years, in the adolescent stage that peer-group pressures to be "feminine" increase and the concept of what is feminine becomes more definite. Friedan (1963:71) noted that at puberty, girls drop special interests and pursue those that will appeal to boys.

Bardwick (1972:54) believes that up to and until puberty, athletic and academic achievement are rewarded equally in boys and girls. But the rewards after that for heterosexual success and punishments are for conspicuous competing achievement.

To be accepted as adult females, girls see that they need to achieve in non-academic ways, by attaining the social graces, achieving beauty in person and dress, finding a desirable social status, and marrying the right man. Komarovsky (1953:327) agrees with other authors on the state of adolescence by saying:

Sometimes in adolescence the message becomes clear that one had better not do too well; that competition is aggressive and unfeminine, that deviating threatens the heterosexual relationship.

Maccoby (1966:77) has pointed out that in high school there is tendency for females to withdraw from competitive aggressive behaviour which may be interpreted as unfeminine. She contends that the girl who maintains qualities of independence and active striving, (achievement orientation) necessary for intellectual mastery defies the conventions of sex appropriate behaviour and pays a price in anxiety.

Girls who follow the normal course of development in adolescence are most likely to seek adult status through preparation for marriage and motherhood. Even if women pursue academics beyond high school and attend college, they will at some time be confronted with the choice of career or marriage and the consequences of the decision they make. Thus, women in their senior college year are faced with the strain of what society wants them to be according to the societal role expectations and responsibilities, and what they as individuals want to become.

The basic results of deviating from the expected feminine roles have been documented by several authors. Garskoff (1971:147), says in light of our cultural norms, a girl should not appear too smart because the development of mind will have only negative results. Females learn that competition in traditionally male activities is widely believed to require a sacrifice of femininity (Bardwick,

1971:64). Therefore, a female can participate and be as active as males only until her teen years and then there is usually a decline and withdrawal from any achievement orientated activities, whether they are intellectual or athletics. Further research has confirmed that the fear of social rejection generates a motive to avoid success, (Horner, 1972:15).

A characteristic description of women's relationship to society would emphasize dependent, unaggressive, non-competitive conforming individuals. Women are raised to want to fill the social roles in which society needs them. They are trained to model themselves after the accepted image and to meet as individuals the expectations that are held for women as a group.

Therefore, to understand how most women are socialized, we must first understand how they see themselves and how they are seen by others. Several studies have been done concerning the woman's image. McClelland (1965:19) states that the female is characterized as small, weak, soft, and light. A more thorough study (Bennett, 1956:73) asked men and women to choose out of a long list of adjectives those which most closely applied to themselves. The findings suggested that the women felt uncertain, anxious, nervous, hasty, careless, fearful, dull, childish, clumsy, and domestic. On the positive side, women felt that they were understanding, tender, sympathetic, generous, affectionate, loving, and patient.

Thus, the female image has some favourable qualities, but they are not the ones normally required for the kind of achievements to which society gives its highest rewards.

Sport represents the American tendency toward association characteristically reserved for men. The opportunities to be aggressive and prove oneself are believed to be inherent male instincts, and the demand for perseverance and comparison, elements of male assertiveness (Felshin, 1974:184). It is clear that in contemporary society sport is identified as a heroic activity and is conceived of as a masculine activity, (Felshin, 1974:182).

Although not all women conform to the expected social roles and norms, the women who enter a profession seem to suffer frustration similar to women who participate in athletics because neither group is conforming to the expected traditional feminine role. Bardwick (1972:57) says that women who participate fully in some professional capacity, run the risk of being atypical and nonfeminine.

In examining women in the work force, findings suggest that women are not adequately represented in professional schools or in professional occupations in society. Rossi (1965:37) says there are two major reasons for the low representation of women in engineering. First, women are afraid that they would be considered unfeminine if they entered such a field, and second, parents discourage their daughters from training for such a field.

There is a significant and increasing absence of American women in the mainstream of thought and achievement in the society (Bardwick, 1972:47). The number of working women is increasing but the vast majority are found in low-skilled jobs and a very small proportion are working at a level close to that reflecting their educational and/or professional training.

Kagan and Moss (1962:53) summarize the problem of women's success and its consequences as follows:

A typical female has greater anxiety over aggressiveness and competitive behaviour than a male. She, therefore, experiences greater conflict over intellectual competition which in turn leads to inhibition of intense strivings for academic excellence.

Thus, if a woman achieves success, she may lose her self-esteem and her sense of femininity which is an internalized standard acquired early in the socialization process (Bardwick, 1971:56).

4. Basic Problems of Women in Sport

The societal norms for women are marriage and motherhood. These roles are supportive and subordinate services in relation to a home and family. Athletics demands the exact reverse of such traditional behaviour norms.

Athletics demands aggression, competitiveness, independence, long hours spent on developing a skill, and long hours of practice perfecting the skill. Women have not been accepted in athletics because of the cultural and social definitions of what a woman is supposed to be at each stage of

development which is particularly emphasized from adolescence, up to and including adulthood.

The socially constructed role of women has restricted opportunities, aspirations, expectations, and social behaviour that are sanctioned for women. This social construct has been seriously applied in the masculinized social conception of sport (Huber, 1973:198). Sport even as an abstraction contains masculine assumptions and serves as a masculine rite of passage (Metheny, 1965:45). Hoffman (1976:5) states that the sum total of the myths of the female athlete creates a major "social acceptability" problem for female involvement in sports.

Most public institutions actively discriminate against females in respect to facility allocation, funding and programming of sport and fitness activities. If they want an arean for recreational hockey, males can set up scheduled time for practice and playing of their games. Females always have to wait and their time is allocated according to the amount of time remaining after the men have scheduled their hockey practices and playing times. Hoffman (1976) explains how fewer hours are allotted to females specifically in the Toronto area. She refers initially to the Mayor's Task Force on the Status of Women in Toronto which made one of its areas of concern the recreation centres in that city.

One of the things we discovered in the ten centres was that on a weekly basis, there were 250 hours for the boys' sport activity and about 130 hours for the girls. (Hoffman, 1976:65).

Another problem is the limited advancement possibilities for women in professional athletics. Professional surfing for women demands high risk for low pay. For the woman, there is the fact that prize money is inversely proportional to the life-and-death risks involved (McCrerey, 1976:113). Laura Chin waited nine days for a good surf but because it was so boring, expensive and hardly worth the prize money, she returned to Hawaii rather than wait for the right weather to participate (McCrerey, 1976:114).

Professional sports for men have served as a vehicle for a rise in social and financial status, but a comparable avenue does not exist for women. In fact, professional sports for women who seek fame and financial success are limited essentially to golf, tennis and ice skating. The game of tennis has achieved more equivalent prize money because of the struggle Billie Jean King went through. Her belief was so strong that women have as much talent as men and work just as hard on the tennis courts when there is a competitive match, she helped professionalize women's tennis. Golf does not present equal prize monies to men and women. The number one winner among the male golfers pockets over \$200,000 a year, while the number one female winner among the golfers pockets only about \$40,000. (West, 1973:95). There exists a \$160,000 difference and the greater amount goes to the male golfer.

Whether the more intense problems of women in sport exist from physical bias or social barriers is open to

argument. Boslooper & Hayes (1973:47) would conclude that the physical bias has created more problems than the social barriers for women athletes who participate in athletics. Women's collegiate athletic programs are measured in hundred and low thousands while men's are measured in the millions. And among the thousands of coed colleges in the U.S., only a handful offer even partial athletic scholarships for girls.

Felshin (1974:207) states that sexist arguments are fairly well known: they assume that women are not proficient enough to be worth of time and money being devoted to them in sport, that women do not really care about sport anyway and, most pernicious of all, that women in sport are so adversely affected that they no longer are real women.

Dunkle (1974:9) in her article, "Equal Opportunities for Women in Sports", says discrimination against female athletes exists. She also points out that female coaches are laughed at and are not taken seriously and that they receive less pay. Felshin (1974:89) agrees that women have been barred directly from participation in some athletic contests. Whether feminine biology, physiology, psychology or the social roles is the rationale, male administrators have simply written the eligibility roles to exclude women.

The amount of research about the female athlete matches what others think about the female athlete. The

female athlete has received so little attention, it is as if she were unborn (Foreman, 1972:265).

Several women professional athletes have stated that they experienced problems as women in sport. Zaharias (1975:40) stated that, "in high school, I wanted to be an athlete, but didn't suppose then I could make a living out of it, except maybe in physical education". Billie Jean King (1975:182) states that part of her problem is being a tennis player, but a bigger problem is being a woman. She also says that because there was such limited coverage of women in sport she started her own magazine--womenSports.

Sport is unfair to women, according to Gilbert and Williamson (1973:88) and they believe a female who persists in her athletic interests, despite the handicaps and discouragements, is not likely to be congratulated on her sporting desire or "grit". She is more apt to be subjected to social and psychological pressures.

5. The Awareness and Existence of Role Strain Among Women Athletes

The social conflict between the desire to participate and achieve in sport and to fulfill appropriate feminine sex roles is believed to characterize the experience for women athletes (Felshin, 1974:245).

Edwards believes that the culture draws up the definitions for social roles and that women athletes have to choose between being regarded as an athlete or as being a woman.

Most are forced by cultural definitions to choose between being an athlete (thereby facing barely hidden suspicions as to the degree of their heterosexuality) and womanhood, (Edwards, 1973:232).

According to the literature, a number of professional athletes at different times openly agreed that role strain existed and they acknowledged experiencing it. Babe Zaharias stated that she experienced some role strain because in the 1930's, 40's and 50's to be part of the competitive world of athletics and not part of the female world of financial dependency presented problems:

It didn't all go along as smooth as that sounds, I wanted to spend my life in sports, but I had to make money too, and that is not easy for a woman athlete, (Zaharias, 1975:20).

Billie Jean King explained that her conflict stemmed from what she as an athlete and a person wanted to be, and what the fans, the press, and society wanted her to be.

That was the conflict: what I was versus what other people wanted me to be, and there were times when I was resentful and bitter when I found out they weren't willing to accept me the way I was.

Maybe I can explain this in another way. When performers sense this conflict, it's easy for them to stop being themselves, to start playing to the audience entirely, to act the way they feel the crowds want them to act so they'll still get that applause and ego boost. For a tennis player, this can be really dangerous, sometimes fatal. (King, 1975:161)

She also explains that the personal pressure got to her and she left tennis aside for a while to sort things out that had occurred in her life. (King, 1975). King says that societal pressure to be feminine certainly differs from

the necessary characteristics to compete in athletics, professional or amateur:

I'd always been taught to be a lady, which was fine as far as it went. But who was kidding whom? That's not the way it was out there, not at all. Players were straining their guts out because tennis is a tough competitive sport, and if you don't believe that you ought to wander into a locker room sometime during a tournament and just see the range of emotions. (King, 1975:169).

Where most authors agree that role conflict/strain exists, Harris (1971:67) suggests that women who take the risk to participate in such competitive athletics are either secure in their role as women so that participation does not strike them as a threat, or they do not care since they have nothing to lose.

It seems that if women at the professional level experience role strain it may be because of the pressures at this level, but if women are aware that their expected role is to be feminine and they deviate, they are going to experience some role strain which they may or may not acknowledge at any level of sports participation.

6. Women's Liberation and Women's Athletics

Garskoff (1971:43) says a goal of liberation is to free individuals from life's structured alternatives. Liberation means that individuals are encouraged by society to develop and to contribute according to their fullest human potential, not according to their sex.

Three major representative groups which make up the women's movement are working women, middle class married

women and students. They all have different kinds of interests, experiences and objectives in women's liberation. Working women are mostly concerned with fair wages, job discrimination, and equal opportunity. The middle class married women, if educated, are rebelling against the trivia which are forced upon their lives and their living through their husbands and children. The students rebel against sex exploitation and being defined in sexual rather than human terms.

All women suffer from economical exploitation, from psychological deprivation, and from exploitive sexuality. Such sufferings began many years ago. Dixon (1972:187) says the political conservatism of the 1950's was echoed in a social conservatism which stressed a Victorian ideal of the woman's life: a full womb and selfless devotion to a husband and children. Members of women's liberation usually work in different areas to prompt change: some attempts are being made in discriminatory laws, to reform hiring practice, and to eliminate graduate school sex quotas.

Boslooper & Hayes (1973:53) state that it wasn't until recently that the women's liberation had anything to say about sexism in athletics. In July, 1972, the National Organization for Women established a committee on women's athletics in the U.S.A. and has since sponsored one major workshop on athletics. Canada's first conference was held in 1974, a National Conference on Woman and Sport

at the University of Toronto. Presently, in the U.S.A. women's advocacy groups include the National Organization for Women (NOW), the Women's Equity League (WEAL), the National Women's Political Caucus (NWPC), and State Commissions on the Status of Women. NOW has a National Task Force on Women in Sport and a Project on Equal Education Rights (PEER). WEAL has recently established a National Clearinghouse on Sex Discrimination in Sports (Burg, 1976:13). Other groups with task forces on women's rights are the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, and Recreation (AAHPER), the Association for Intercollegiate Athletics for Women (AIAW), the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) (Burg, 1976:13).

Groups for women's rights in Canada consist of the Advisory Council on the Status of Women and the Royal Commission on the Status of Women. It is evident that the U.S.A. has more groups working for women's rights in all areas, including athletics, than does Canada.

Felshin (1974:269) describes the women's movement as working towards feminist/humanist goals and rejecting the masculine standards as the norms. It is on this basis that a new conception of sport for women is required. The feminist position demands that the inequality of women in sport be perceived as a political issue and be confronted as sexism, without reference to evaluation of the outcome, (Felshin, 1974:269).

Abigail Hoffman (1976) suggests that the women's movement and women in sport must join together to form a stronger alliance to make changes. She addressed the audience who attended the women's conference on sport in 1974 and stated:

We felt that we had nothing in common with the women's movement. It seems that the women's movement, through its lack of interest in matters relating to sports and the physical development of women, was really ignoring us. (Hoffman, 1976:63)

Hoffman (1976:64) made several suggestions concerning the women's movement and women's athletics: (1) that women athletes join with the women's movement; (2) that women athletes establish what women who are involved in athletics are doing and let the women's liberation know what is going on in athletics; and (3) that women athletes know that they all have the same basic goal: to strengthen their self-images.

She pointed out that at the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg, a women's studies program was to be initiated. Part of this new program would be a special course on physical activity and sport for women. Such a course should be a real step toward bridging the gap between the women's movement and women athletes (Hoffman, 1976:65).

7. Conclusions

In our western culture, females' socially acceptable roles are more passive and less active than the social roles of men. Women do not compete or show aggression and in the crucial stage of adolescence where decisions

of career and appropriate adult roles are to be made, women are expected to prepare for marriage and motherhood. At adolescence, however, males are preparing for careers and developing their skills in competitiveness, decision-making and aggressiveness. It is acceptable for males to compete in academics or athletics at any level but not for women.

Thus, women who have learned the athletic role in their families and among their peers in early childhood will have internalized the athletic role upon the arrival of adolescence. It is at this time that the greatest pressures to conform to the feminine role expectations are most explicit.

Women who have internalized the athletic role and continue their involvement in their adult roles are most likely to experience role strain.

CHAPTER II

THE RESEARCH MODEL

In this study, socialization is considered to be the cumulative learning of social roles consistent with the process described by Brim:

A process of learning through which an individual is prepared with varying degrees of success to meet the requirements laid down by other members of society for his behaviour in a variety of situations. And is socialization is role-learning it as follows, that socialization would occur throughout the individual's life (Brim, 1966:128).

Early role learning is simply an internalization of reinforced roles, but later role learning becomes more complicated because new roles are being learned to meet the requirements expected in social situations. Brim (1960) views socialization as being two distinct periods in one's life: childhood socialization and adult socialization. During childhood, the greatest learning occurs because of the intensity with which rewards and punishments are administered. Role behaviour varies in each situation, but basic behaviours and reactions to situations are established in an individual's childhood. Adult socialization in later years builds on attitudes and skills acquired earlier, using them as a foundation for later, more demanding learning (Brim, 1960:133).

In early socialization, the family is the primary role-learning situs and the secondary role site consists of other institutions which do not start to be effective

until school age, but which continue on throughout an individual's life. Therefore, it must be assumed that women who participate in athletics have internalized an athletic role learned in early socialization from certain role models.

Socialization into an athletic role which is male orientated has specific consequences. More formally stated:

Socialization of women into intercollegiate athletics results in an internalization of the male role model and role strain as a consequence.

Chafetz (1974:36) defines the feminine role as socially learned and is made up of such traits as being emotional, passive, scatterbrained, dependent, a follower, shy, weak, and non-athletic. The masculine role, as Chafetz defines it, includes such traits as bravery, confidence, aggressiveness, independence, leadership, domination, strength and athletic prowess, (1974:36). The masculine and athletic roles, as seen by society, are similar to each other and reinforce each other for those males who participate in athletics.

Women are expected to concentrate on being feminine and submissive rather than aggressive in any activities, including those of athletics. The conflicting role demands placed on women who compete in athletics are explored in the interviews with women who participate in intercollegiate athletics at the university level.

Women involved in athletics are excluded from primary level involvement, (Edwards, 1973:232), because these

involvements consist of body contact, aggressive action against the opponent, and North American culture defines these behaviours as masculine, unacceptable and unfeminine for women. The work of Eleanor Metheny (1970) and Marie Hart (1972), among others, indicates that is deemed inappropriate for women to engage in sports that require the participant to assume an awkward or "unbecoming" position. On the other hand, it is more appropriate for women to engage in athletics where a physical barrier separates opponents and where grace and aesthetically pleasing movement are demanded. So, while males are participating in football, basketball, baseball, and boxing and wrestling, and otherwise preparing themselves for their destined roles as "custodians of the Republic", women are propelling themselves gracefully over the ice or through the water, or they are slapping a ball over a tennis net (Edmiston, 1974:69).

Opportunity structure also affects socialization into athletics. Cloward & Ohlin (1960:148) use the term of imply the availability of legitimate means to a goal. Access to physical area (facilities-gymnasium, pool or track) and to social agents which serve as role models (teachers and coaches) acts to encourage participation and skill development and are necessary for an individual to become a participant in athletics. If there are no athletic facilities, and no coaches in the school and community, then it is rarely possible for an individual to

enter athletics, even if the motor ability, interest and other role models are present.

Another aspect of opportunity structure is the role of significant others, or the coaches and teachers who act as role models and encourage participation in athletics. A second type of role model or reference group would be the peer group of fellow athletes. They would be of particular importance during the female athlete's adolescence because she is faced with a conflicting expectation to be feminine and to prepare for marriage and motherhood.

Geographical location is related to opportunity structure and explains the ways in which some women are able to become involved in intercollegiate athletics. Where the individual is reared and resides affects the opportunities provided for athletic participation. It is within an available athletic structure that opportunity occurs for those interested in athletics. The type of athletics that an individual becomes involved in, and whether it is an individual or team sport, may be a result of geographical location at the time of early socialization. Malumphy (1960:616), found that those involved in individual sports were from urban areas and those involved in team sports were from rural areas.

These considerations support the view that socialization in primary and secondary groups, social position, and opportunity structure are the most important factors in

examining how people first get involved in intercollegiate athletics. And these provide a base to formulate the following hypotheses:

1. Parental or sibling participation in athletics will provide models which influence women's involvement during their childhood socialization.
2. Identification with role models will provide encouragement and skill development in childhood socialization.
3. During school age socialization, the presence and association and identification with a well-defined peer or reference group will influence involvement in athletics.
4. The facility availability, and the type of reinforcer or social agent, will contribute to the type of athletics women in intercollegiate athletics have chosen.

What an individual thinks he/she is and the unique traits he/she believes him/herself to possess constitute his/her self-concept (Webster & Sobieszek, 1974:7), and this may be affected if women involved in intercollegiate athletics, are, in fact, experiencing role strain. To be aware of oneself and of the roles expected of one in society comes within the primary group, and this is where the self-concept emerges. This group which includes parents and siblings is where interaction begins and it is through such interaction that the self-concept is first established. At school age, the peer group begins to affect one's self-concept. The self-concept is maintained through social interaction and appropriate role behaviour within this new group and other such reference groups. And the self-concept is composed primarily of learned social roles.

If the role behaviour is not congruent with society's expectations, role strain would probably result and have an effect on the women athletes' self-concept. But if there is an awareness of role strain, psycho-social mechanisms may be used to reduce it.

Thus, role strain may result from the conflicting demands of the traditional role expectations of women, but their year of study may have an effect on their self-concept. Thus, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

5. Role strain results from the opposite demands made by traditional feminine self-concepts and athletic self-concept.
6. Women athletes enrolled in a senior year of a university program are more likely to acknowledge role strain than women enrolled in a freshman, sophomore or junior year.

It may be that the individual with a high level of motor development and skills finds athletics to be a physically rewarding activity. Athletics may also provide some individuals with psychological gratifications-- athletics may provide a release for aggression generated in other social situations; a coach may provide an otherwise absent father figure; or, athletics may provide a stage where achievement becomes visible. Whatever the motivation, the assumption of the study stated that women in intercollegiate athletics have been socialized into athletics through learning of appropriate social roles and within a favourable opportunity structure.

1. Research Methodology

The basis of the study's research model is role theory. Role theory encompasses learned behaviour. What is known about the learning role behaviour derives largely from a different tradition of thought and inquiry; this other focus, called "socialization" is concerned particularly with the learning of socially relevant behaviour at various stages of the life cycle (Biddle & Thomas, 1966:345). Socialization reveals more descriptive information about the processes by which such behaviour appears, remains or disappears from one's role system, (Biddle & Thomas, 1966:345).

It was decided to limit the study to those women participating in intercollegiate athletics at the University of Windsor. The methodology employed for this study was the focused interview, (Merton, Fiske & Kendall, 1956). The data were collected from a representative sample of women athletes who compete in individual and team athletics at the intercollegiate level at the University of Windsor. The population of women athletes consisted of approximately 160 women and, from this, a random sample of 40 was drawn for intensive interviewing. The sample of 40 women athletes were drawn by using random number tables (Rand, 1955). The sampling frame included women participating in individual and team sports, physical education majors and other majors.

Before the random sample of women athletes were contacted, several pilot interviews were scheduled to verify the reliability and validity of the design of the interview

schedule.

An interview schedule was devised that followed the socialization into athletics in a chronological fashion, and at the same time asked relevant questions about the self-concept in the present. Twenty of the women athletes in the sample from various athletic involvements, team and individual, agreed to be interviewed, (Appendix I). All questions were open-ended and although the questions were standardized, there was a good deal of flexibility because the interviews themselves were tape recorded. Respondents were encouraged to amplify and clarify their answers if they did not seem complete (Merton, Fiske & Kendall, 1956).

Specific questions were asked in the interview schedule to examine the women athletes' socialization, (Appendix II). Questions were asked about their socio-demographic backgrounds: (1) What is your father's occupation? What education does your father have? (2) What education does your mother have? Is your mother working? (3) How many children are in your family? (Using first names could you state their sex and age?) (4) How did you get along with your schoolwork in elementary school? (5) What were your parents' attitudes towards your schoolwork? (6) What hobbies did you have in elementary school? and (7) What is your family attitude towards athletics? Such questions gave insight into some of the social behaviours learned in childhood.

Another important aspect of socialization that contributes to the learning of social roles is that the presence of role models has an influence on the type of behaviour learned and internalized. Parents, siblings and relatives are the first role models an individual is exposed to. The behaviour and attitudes of the family towards athletics have an effect on the learning and internalizing of an athletic role. The questions used to explore what the family felt about athletics were as follows:

- (1) Were either or both of your parents involved in athletics in the past? If so, please state the sport/sports.
- (2) Have they continued their involvement in athletics?
- (3) Have you any brother or sisters involved in athletics? If so, state the sport/sports.

At school age there are new role models and that begins to influence learned roles. Questions were asked for each level: elementary, high school and university. The questions were as follows: (1) If you recall, who were your friends in elementary school? And how did they come to be your friends? (2) In high school, who were your friends and what were their interests? (3) Did your group of friends change, at any time during high school years? If so, when and why? (4) Who are your friends in university and what are their interests? (Use first names). The presence of a coach, who is a role model, affects the learning and internalizing of the athletic role. The women athletes were asked, "How would you describe the women,

athletes' relationship with their coach?"

To examine the women athletes' internalization of their sex role, they were asked, "How does society define the feminine role?" and, "Do you feel such a definition is appropriate to the role?"

The concept of opportunity structure which means the access to facilities and being able to use them, was examined when the women athletes were asked, "Was it easy for you to become involved in athletics? Please explain." Also, "What were the major influences that got you involved in athletics? Please expand."

Role strain, another relevant concept in role theory and in this study, was examined by asking direct and indirect questions. The questions were as follows:

- (1) What did you like most about sport involvement?
- (2) Did you at any time feel that you had sacrificed anything?
- (3) What other alternatives did you have besides athletics in high school?
- (4) Did any of your friends, family or relatives discourage your involvement in athletics?
- (5) Did any of your relatives, family or friends encourage your participation in athletics?
- (6) Is there any specific time in your athletic career that you made a conscious decision to continue in athletics? If yes, when and why?

Self-concept was explored in a number of questions:

- (1) What are the responses when you tell people you are involved in competitive athletics?
- (2) How do male athletes see women athletes?
- (3) Do women athletes have a good social life?
- (4) How do women athletes get along

when they go out socially? (5) Do women athletes date as often as women non-athletes? (6) Do women athletes date male athletes?

The remaining chapters are organized in the following way:

Chapter III introduces, defines and examines the process of socialization through early childhood to the adult socialization of women athletes. It examines the specific effects of the family in early childhood socialization and the effects of the social agents within the educational system, including the university years.

Chapter IV investigates the specific role system of women athletes. It defines roles, and the sex role (masculine and feminine). It explains how the sex role and the athletic role are interrelated in the process of socialization. The difference in team and individual participants in athletics are illustrated as part of the role-learning of women athletes. The development of the self-concept concludes the chapter.

Chapter V deals with the potential, presence and management of role strain. It explains how women athletes who occupy two significant social roles, the feminine role and the athletic role, each requiring different and opposing set of values and behaviour develop role strain. The management tactics of those women athletes who acknowledge role strain is examined. The effects of the role strain upon the self-concept of women athletes concludes the chapter.

CHAPTER III

THE CONTEXT OF EARLY SOCIALIZATION

The role of socialization in allowing women to participate in intercollegiate athletics was explored and partially explained in this study. Socialization into an athletically oriented family is one explanation of why certain women internalized an athletic role very early in life and maintained this role throughout their university years. There were, however, a number of other influences that affected the women athletes' entrance into athletics and participation in it up to and including their university years.

A close examination of demographic factors, social class, attitudes and experience in school provided some reasons as to why women participated in athletics for so many years. The process of socialization can be explained as a development learning process. An individual is socialized into certain roles in our culture, such as gender roles, at an early age. They are assigned a role of brother or sister, depending on the sex of the child.

Within this social learning of roles, the self-concept develops. As the individual gets older, there are more roles being internalized, thus complicating the process of socialization. If a conflict between the roles arises, it may be difficult to maintain an equilibrium in one's role structure.

In early socialization, the feminine role and the athletic role are learned simultaneously. The earliest and most encouraging models are the families and family members of the women athletes. The families and their members saw athletics as rewarding and encouraged and reinforced continued athletic participation.

Socialization depends upon the influence of agents in the context of a variety of social situations. Although starting with the family situation, a child later goes to school where he/she interacts with new socializing agents. The importance and extent of influence varies considerably with each individual. Examining socialization in a chronological fashion illustrated the various agents that were present and who influenced the acquisition of roles and how these roles fit into the role structure of the women athletes.

1. Childhood Socialization

During childhood it's likely that athletic potential will be nurtured in a family atmosphere which encourages and promotes physical activity. (Hall, 1973:13).

It is in the family that women athletes began to learn roles for which they are rewarded or punished later in the larger society. The family into which a child is born presents selective versions of the values and roles of the larger society and stresses which of the many possible variations will be internalized.

In this particular study, most of the women athletes reported that they had maintained a close relationship

with their families all through their school years, including their university years. Social class was assigned according to parental education and occupation. The education of the women athletes' mothers varied: five out of twenty attended elementary school; eight attended high school and the seven remaining attended professional school (Table I (A)). Although most of the mothers had received a formal education in nursing or teachers' college, few were employed either on a full-time or part-time basis and the majority were housewives. The father's educational background included two of the twenty who had completed elementary school, six who had completed high school, three who had completed college and nine who had completed professional school (Table I (B)). In the occupational classification, there were three out of twenty fathers involved in unskilled jobs, two fathers in semi-skilled jobs, six in skilled jobs and nine in professional occupations which varied from medical doctor to computer scientist (Table II). From this data, it was concluded that the majority of women athletes had middle-class backgrounds.

In this study, except in two cases, one or both of the parents had been athletes and had continued their involvement in athletics. Some parents still participated actively in sport; some had a more passive type of involvement such as coaching or simply watching. None of the women athletes reported that any family member ever discouraged her participation in athletics. The families were

TABLE I (A)

MOTHER'S EDUCATION

	ELEMENTARY	HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE	GRADUATE SCHOOL	PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL
1)					X
2)		X			
3)					X
4)	X				
5)					X
6)	X				
7)	X				
8)		X			
9)		X			
10)	X				
11)		X			
12)					X
13)					X
14)		X			
15)					X
16)		X			
17)		X			
18)	X				
19)					X
20)		X			
	5	8	0	0	7

TABLE I (B)
FATHER'S EDUCATION

	ELEMENTARY	HIGH SCHOOL	COLLEGE	GRADUATE SCHOOL	PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL
1)					X
2)	X				
3)		X			
4)					X
5)		X			
6)					X
7)			X		
8)		X			
9)		X			
10)					X
11)		X			
12)					X
13)					X
14)	X				
15)					X
16)					X
17)			X		
18)			X		
19)					X
20)		X			
	2	6	3	0	9

TABLE II
FATHER'S OCCUPATION

	OCCUPATION	UNSKILLED	SEMI- SKILLED	SKILLED	PROFESSIONAL
1)	DOCTOR				X
2)	LABOURER	X			
3)	ENGINEER				X
4)	LABOURER	X			
5)	LABOURER	X			
6)	DENTIST				X
7)	TEACHER				X
8)	CUSTOMS, BROKER			X	
9)	BUS DRIVER			X	
10)	CONSTRUCTION WORKER		X		
11)	INSURANCE SALESMAN			X	
12)	GENERAL FOREMAN			X	
13)	COUNSELLOR				X
14)	ARCHITECT				X
15)	CUSTODIAN		X		
16)	WELDER			X	
17)	ACCOUNTANT				X
18)	LAB TECHNICIAN			X	
19)	OFFICE MANAGER				X
20)	COMPUTER SCIENTIST				X
		3	2	6	9

supportive and encouraged continued participation. Snyder (1970:3) investigated a large number of women athletes enrolled in a junior college physical education program and active in women's intercollegiate athletics at the college. In examining familial influence, he concluded that the parents' interest in athletics showed a consistent positive relationship with all dimensions of athletic involvement.

The data from this study are in agreement with the Snyder (1970) findings and provide confirmation and support for the following hypothesis:

Parental and/or sibling participation in athletics will provide models which influence women's involvement during their childhood socialization.

In this study there was a tendency for the like-sexed parent to have had less influence on the respondent's behavioural involvement than the opposite-sexed parent. Over half of the women athletes (11 out of 20) were involved in the same type of athletics as their fathers (Table III).

J., was born in Toronto, her father is self-employed and her mother doesn't work. She is the eldest of six children. Her parents were involved in athletics in the past, and at present, her father coaches swimming. She says she became involved in athletics because of her father.

My mother was a bowler in her younger years and she still bowls. My dad was a swimmer and is now a swimming coach. Therefore, I began to swim very young.

TABLE III

THE PARTICULAR ATHLETICS THE WOMEN ATHLETES'
FATHERS WERE INVOLVED IN

	DAUGHTER'S SPORT	FATHER'S SPORT	SAME SPORT	STILL ACTIVE
1)	BASKETBALL	BB	X	X
2)	VOLLEYBALL & BASKETBALL	VB	X	
3)	BASKETBALL	BB & GOLF		X
4)	SWIMMING	CYCLING		X
5)	BASKETBALL & VOLLEYBALL	BB	X	X
6)	BASKETBALL & TRACK & FIELD	BB	X	X
7)	SWIMMING	HOCKEY		X
8)	VOLLEYBALL	NOT INVOLVED IN ATHLETICS		
9)	VOLLEYBALL	BADMINTON		
10)	TRACK & FIELD	T & F	X	X
11)	SWIMMING	NOT INVOLVED IN ATHLETICS		
12)	SWIMMING	SWIMMING	X	X
13)	BASKETBALL	BB & VB	X	X
14)	VOLLEYBALL	BB & GOLF		X
15)	BASKETBALL	BB	X	X
16)	SWIMMING	SWIMMING	X	X
17)	TRACK & FIELD	T&F & WRESTLING	X	
18)	BASKETBALL	FOOTBALL		
19)	TRACK & FIELD	T & F	X	
20)	BASKETBALL	HOCKEY		X
			11	13

In this particular case, the parents demonstrated interest, participation and specific instruction. M., is the eldest of seven children who are all very active in athletics. Both the mother and father were involved in athletics in the past and encouraged participation in athletics by playing such things as basketball and baseball with all of their children. M. said:

My dad played basketball and baseball all his life and all of us seven children played basketball at home with both of our parents. When we got to school, we all played basketball on school teams.

In this study, the sex of the siblings did not have any effect on them providing athletic models for women athletes during their childhood.

The ordinal position of the women athletes proved to be a more significant factor in this study than the size of the family, two variables of potential importance when considering the development of athletes. Over half of the women athletes (11 out of 20) were first-born. More than half of the sample's siblings were involved in the same sport as the women athletes themselves, if the sex of the sibling is disregarded (Table IV).

In the following cases both women athletes were involved in the same sport as one or more of the siblings in the family, and were also first-born children. J. was born in an urban area of Ontario, oldest of four children, three of whom were involved in swimming. She entered athletics because her parents had participated in the past

TABLE IV

BIRTH ORDER AND NUMBER AND SEX OF THEIR SIBLINGS
AND THE SPORT THEY ARE INVOLVED IN

	WOMEN ATHLETES- SPORT	BIRTH ORDER	SIBLINGS OF WOMEN ATHLETES			SAME SPORT	STILL ACTIVE
			#	SEX	SPORT INVOLVED IN		
1)	BB & VB	1st	6	2f/4m	T&F and BB	X	X
2)	BB & VB	1st	4	4f	Swimming		X
3)	BB	3rd	10	7f/3m	Basketball	X	X
4)	Swimming	2nd	2	2f	Swimming	X	X
5)	BB & VB	2nd	4	4f	Swimming		X
6)	BB & T&F	1st	4	4m	Basketball	X	X
7)	Swimming	6th	5	2f/3m	Hockey & Swimming	X	X
8)	Volleyball	1st	8	1f/7m	Not Involved in Athletics		
9)	Volleyball	1st	5	2m/3f	Basketball		X
10)	T & F	1st	7	4m/3f	Track & Field	X	X
11)	Swimming	1st	6	5m/1f	Not Involved in Athletics		
12)	Swimming	3rd	4	4f	Swimming	X	X
13)	Basketball	2nd	2	2m	Basketball	X	X
14)	Volleyball	1st	3	1f/2m	S & Football		X
15)	Basketball	1st	6	5f/1m	Swimming		X
16)	Swimming	4th	4	4f	T & F and Tennis		X
17)	T & F	1st	5	4m/1f	Track & Field	X	X
18)	Basketball	1st	7	3m/4f	Basketball	X	X
19)	T & F	2nd	3	1m/2f	Basketball		X
20)	Basketball	7th	8	5m/3f	Hockey & Swimming		X
		11				10	20
		first born					

and had encouraged such participation. The entire family was involved in athletics. She says:

I am the oldest of four children. I have two sisters and my brother is the youngest. We all, including our parents, are involved in athletics.

K., born in Hamilton, Ontario, was the oldest of a family of four daughters. Her father was active in basketball and employed as an accountant. Her mother was active in volleyball and trained for a legal secretary but since her marriage has not worked. Her father is still active in basketball in the local community and her mother plays some volleyball with members of the community two nights a month. K. says, "Me and my three sisters all play basketball on school teams and at home with our parents".

It is possible to conclude that an athletically orientated family which encourages, reinforces and presents athletics favourably to the children is an important influence in childhood socialization.

2. Elementary School

At the beginning of school, the women athletes are moving from a milieu dominated by personal ties to one that is less personal. The degree of impersonality is theoretically less at the kindergarten level than in later socialization, (Elkin, 1960:111). In elementary school, the socialization is still continued by the family, but it doesn't have the same influence as it did in earlier, preschool socialization. A gradual shift of significant role models takes place. The peer group and reference

group are the new significant role models. School is the beginning of the socialization into the student role. Such a role will be learned from interaction and exposure to peers and classmates.

It can be assumed, at least in this study, that the athletic role was being learned prior to school socialization. But, in school it was being even more strongly internalized as the women athlete participated in athletics, were becoming involved in physical education classes, and being coached by athletic instructors.

From the data, the women athletes' peer group at the elementary school level consisted of neighbours and classmates. At the junior high school level (grades 7 & 8) the women athletes' peer group enlarged to encompass athletic people. The reason for this is probably that at this age level most of the women athletes participated in athletics at an organized and competitive level.

In the following section, the women athletes described who made up their peer group in the early part of elementary school. L., the oldest daughter of a family of six children, had been involved in competitive swimming throughout elementary school. Her family are all active in athletics. She swam year round and cycled with her family in the summer. L. said:

When I was young I used to walk to school with my next door neighbours and I played with them and my classmates at recess and after school.

D., the oldest of four sisters born in Ottawa, was involved

in competitive swimming and track and field since junior high school. Her parents were both involved in athletics, not on a competitive level, but more as a hobby. Her friends in elementary school were from her neighbourhood and school. She said:

While I was in elementary school, my circle of friends consisted of neighbourhood kids and classmates.

School is where opportunity structure for athletic participation prevails. Access to physical area and to social agents which serve as models act to encourage participation and skill development and is necessary for an individual to become a participant in athletics. If there are no athletic facilities and no coaches, it is difficult to enter athletics, even if the motor ability, interest and other role models are present.

Although the majority of women athletes had some athletic experience prior to school, it was in elementary school where most of the women first became involved in competition. There were a few exceptions, especially swimmers whose schools rarely had pools and who had to use other facilities. Thus, in some cases, women began their involvement in organized athletics at the elementary school level, either in school or in the community and wherever facilities were available. M., the oldest of eleven children, five boys and six girls, was involved in athletics, mainly basketball, in the latter part of elementary school. M. stated:

In grade seven, I took up track and field and basketball and I am still playing basketball on a team at university.

D., the oldest of three girls, and from the Toronto area, was involved in swimming before she entered school and in early junior high school, at which time she wanted to train for competitive swimming, but there were no facilities available. She said:

I can still remember going to swimming lessons before school started. In late elementary school my sisters and I had to go 15 miles to attend swimming practice for competition because our school had no pool.

School is not the only place that provided opportunity for athletes, but in most cases the athletic participation which began in the families of the women athlete was continued in school.

At the elementary school level there were usually facilities available for such athletics as track and field and basketball, but not always for swimming. The facility available did not appear to determine the type of athletics the women athletes chose. Therefore, the following hypothesis was not confirmed:

The facility availability, and the type of reinforcer or social agent, will contribute to the type of athletics women in inter-collegiate athletics have chosen.

At this time in their lives, women athletes were going through a developmental process of socialization which would allow them to become individual members of society. The family governed the process in early life

and provided the opportunities, and then the school took over the influence and direction of socialization and the opportunities available. At the high school level, other influences have to be considered.

3. High School

In high school the peer group increases in importance. In addition, the reference group are coaches and teachers who are important agents and specific role models. The peer group of these women athletes were athletes who supported and encouraged athletic participation, thus reinforcing continued participation at the high school level. According to Hall (1973:13), the developing athletic potential must be complemented by a positive peer group and such opportunity is more available in high school than elementary school.

The study demonstrated that the friends of the women athletes included some peers from elementary school but, for most, they consisted of others participating in athletics, especially in the senior high school years. As they participated in sports and practice together and make friendships among others who shared similar interests, they tended to become somewhat isolated from non-athletes. The presence of such a well-defined peer group had a definite influence on the involvement of women athletes in athletics. The peer groups, found in this study, were athletically oriented and they provided encouragement, support and friendships among a group who were interested in the same area. Therefore, the following hypotheses would be

accepted:

During school age socialization, the presence, association and identification with a well defined peer or reference group will influence involvement in athletics.

The following interviews reported on the friends of the women athletes in high school. J., born in a town in Ontario, participated in athletics throughout the late part of elementary school and through all her high school years. She said that in high school most of her friends were athletes.

My friends in the early part of high school were friends from elementary school. We all went to the same high school. Once I made the senior basketball team in grade eleven, most of my friends were on the basketball team.

J. was the oldest of seven children and with their parents all were very active in athletics. She had close friendships with athletes in both elementary and high school:

My friends in elementary school played on the volleyball team and in high school they were also on the volleyball team.

Participation in athletics and the interaction with an athletic peer group enhanced athletic role learning. During high school years, all of the athletes in the sample were intensely involved in sports as well as some other school activity such as the student council or the girls' athletic association. Such cases illustrated the particular type of activities besides athletics they were involved in during their high school years. L., a third

year physical education major who had been involved in athletics since elementary school, reported on the activities she was involved in in her high school years.

She says:

While in high school, I was a member of the gymnastics team, treasurer of the Student Council and a member of the Women's Athletic Association.

G., born in London, Ontario, a first year Arts student, had been active in athletics since elementary school. In high school she was involved in competitive and non-competitive school activities. G. says:

In elementary school, I played volleyball and throughout my high school years I played basketball and served on the Student Council and was a member of the science club.

4. University

During the women athletes' university years, most of their peer group consisted of women involved in athletics at the university. The majority of women athletes stated that other athletes (13 out of 20) were their main friends, while the next highest rated friends were the women athletes classmates (10 out of 20); the remainder of respondents stated that their friends were room-mates (6 out of 20) or residence peers (6 out of 20). In most cases, women athletes were their close friends with some classmates and residence peers also being their friends. Their athlete friends were those with whom the women athletes spent the most time with since these women were usually enrolled in the physical education program and were classmates as well as

participants in athletics.

In response to the question, "How often do you see your parents?", the majority of women athletes (11 out of 20) stated that they visited with them on a monthly basis; some visited on a bi-monthly basis (6 out of 20) and the remainder (3 out of 20) were classified in the other column as their visits varied and were not on a regular basis. Therefore, such a finding suggests that although at school age women athletes were exposed to new role models, the strong pre-school influence of the positive relationship with athletics prevailed throughout the years the women athletes spent in the educational system.

In the process of socialization the self-concept emerged and role learning affected it at different intensities at different stages of development. In elementary school, the self-concept emerged, but at this age there was little awareness of any affect it might have had on one's system. At the high school level and during the college years the roles that have been internalized into the role system affected the self-concept. But in the case of the women athletes who had internalized a masculine gender role--the athletic role--a potential for role conflict is created. The effects of the roles internalized by women athletes on their self-concept will be explained more extensively in the next chapter.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROLE SYSTEM OF WOMEN ATHLETES

The role system of women involved in athletics at the university level is complex. The learning of roles, role expectation and obligations and role behaviour usually requires a long process of learning so that there is an understanding of the specific cultural blueprints which outline the expected role (Sebald, 1968:511).

A role is a set of expectations applied to an incumbent to a particular position (Gross, Mason & McEachern, 1958:67). Although it is possible to specify other components, there is considerable agreement that role and position are basic to any model of a role system (Gross, Mason & McEachern, 1958:17). The learning of both the sex-role and the athletic role and the summation of role learning in the self-concept are the subjects of this chapter.

1. Learning of Sex Roles

Sex role learning begins early and is an ongoing part of the socialization process (Angrist, 1966:448). The learning and internalizing of society's sex role expectations is a central part of socialization of all children in our culture. Sex role definition involves age role definition. The female sex role at age five is specific to the attributes of the five year old and different from the female sex role at twenty-five. Thus, at each

developmental level, a sex role specified for that level is implemented. Angrist (1969) states that the sex role grows out of the socialization process. Sex roles are acquired through actual interactions, imitations and modeling (Komarovsky, 1962:63). At various stages of the life cycle there are more societal pressure than at other times to conform to one's particular sex role. In early childhood, boys and girls may be dressed and treated differently, according to their sex roles, but it is at the adolescence stage that both psychological and physiological pressures to be feminine or masculine are most prevalent. Until this time, boys and girls are rewarded equally for their achievements (Bardwick, 1972). Girls are expected to begin preparation for their adult roles of wife and mother, and boys are expected to prepare for a career. Girls should become conforming, dependent individuals, while boys become independent and achievement oriented individuals.

Understanding the adult sex role depends on the perception of and specific role expectations of masculinity and femininity in Western society.

The masculine role is characterized by Bardwick and Douvan (1972:52) as showing:

Independence, aggression, competitiveness, leadership, task orientation, outward orientation, assertiveness, innovation, self-discipline, stoicism, activity, objectivity, analytic-mindedness, courage, unsentimentality, rationality, confidence, and emotional control.

The feminine role is characterized in an opposite fashion:

Dependence, passivity, fragility, low pain tolerance, non-aggression, non-competitiveness, inner orientation, interpersonal orientation, empathy, sensitivity, nurturance, subjectivity, inability to risk, emotional liability, supportiveness (Bardwick & Douvan, 1972:52).

Such traits could be considered the cultural stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. The stereotypical definitions of the athletic role, according to Chafetz (1974) are interrelated and complementary to the male sex role and are especially reinforcing for those males who participate in athletics.

2. Learning of the Athletic Role

Fundamental learning of the athletic role would appear to have taken place in early childhood within the family structure. The analysis of the case histories of women involved in intercollegiate athletics verified the importance of their families for the learning and internalization of the athletic role and becoming involved in athletics. There were a few cases in which women had entered athletics because of significant others, and not their families.

The data state that in most cases the parents and siblings of the women athletes were involved in athletics and encouraged and supported participation. Therefore, the family may be assumed to be one of the important factors influencing the learning and internalizing of the athletic role.

D., a fourth year physical education major, recalls

her mother driving her and her sisters fifteen miles to swimming lessons every week.

J. became involved in athletics because of her father who was a swimming coach and who started her swimming at a very early age. K., a volleyball player and basketball player, participated in athletics in early childhood. M., a graduate student in physical education, stated that her parents were both active in athletics in the past and encouraged all their eleven children to participate in athletics at an early age. C., a third year student, explained how she became involved in athletics. She stated that a friend of the family who was a physical education director in Michigan had encouraged her to take part in track and field. T., a first year physical education major, stated that she became involved in athletics because of her own desire. None of her family was involved in athletics. There may be a number of motives and influences which are related to women's athletic participation, but in this study, the family was most significant in early role learning. Secondary role learning occurs at about the age of five years when the child enters school. School rewards and punishes role behaviour learned in the family and provides new role models. At elementary level, most of the women athletes in this study were involved in athletics. Their peers consisted of classmates and neighbours and they had little effect on the internalization and learning of the athletic role.

The peers of the women athletes in high school consisted mainly of athletic persons involved in the same type of athletics as the women athletes themselves. Such an association with a strong peer group involved in athletics may have reinforced the women athletes' participation in athletics, therefore strengthening the internalization of the athletic role. Athletes were the peers of most of the women involved in intercollegiate athletics at the university level.

Another significant factor in considering the learning and internalizing of the athletic role was the presence of role models. Through interaction with these models the women athletes were reinforced for their athletic behaviour. A woman athlete's coach would be a role model who had an effect on the internalization and maintaining of the athletic role.

How the women athletes described their relationship with their coach differed somewhat, but the majority (11 out of 20) described their relationship with their coach as her being more of a friend. Some women athletes (5 out of 20) responded by saying their relationship with their coach was motherly. The remainder (3 out of 20) described their relationship with their coach as sisterly. The women athletes' relationship with their coach seems to have been a close one, although the coach acted as a role model and encouraged and supported athletic participation.

Most of the women athletes described the male athletes'

relationship with their coach differently. They stated that women who coached were more interested in participation and improvement of skills, whereas a male coach demanded respect and hard work so that the athletes won every time they went into a game.

The coach is a role model who reinforces the athletic role and this helps maintain the equilibrium of the women athletes role system. The sex of the coach also seems to have an effect on the types of behaviours and expectations that are internalized concerning the athletic role of women athletes. The women athletes suggest that different expectations are placed upon them depending on the sex of a coach. The male coach trains athletes long hours to win and the female coach emphasizes participation.

In examining the type of sports played by women athletes some interesting factors emerged. Although all the women athletes were active in intercollegiate athletics at university, some were involved in team athletics and some were involved in individual athletics. The majority of women athletes were first born, thus their ordinal rank had a significant relationship to their type of athletic involvement. There were more women athletes who were first born who were involved in team athletics than individual athletics (Table V).

The personality characteristics showed significant differences between team and individual athletics. The team athletes seem to enjoy athletics for social reasons

TABLE V

BIRTH ORDER AND TYPE OF ATHLETIC INVOLVEMENT--
TEAM OR INDIVIDUAL

	<u>RESPONDENT'S</u> <u>SPORT</u>	<u>BIRTH</u> <u>ORDER</u>	<u>TYPE OF</u> <u>ATHLETIC INVOLVEMENT*</u> <u>TEAM</u> <u>INDIVIDUAL</u>
1)	BB & VB	1st	X
2)	VB & BB	1st	X
3)	BB	3rd	X
4)	S	2nd	X
5)	BB & VB	2nd	X
6)	BB & T & F	1st	X X
7)	S	6th	X
8)	VB	1st	X
9)	VB	1st	X
10)	T & F	1st	X
11)	S	1st	X
12)	S	3rd	X
13)	BB	2nd	X
14)	VB	1st	X
15)	BB	1st	X
16)	S	4th	X
17)	T & F	1st	X
18)	BB	1st	X
19)	BB	1st	X
20)	BB	7th	X
			<hr/> 12 9

*In some cases, the Respondents were involved in team and individual athletics.

and being able to interact with their peers. Women in individual athletics enjoyed the competition and why wanted to win.

Schacter's (1959) study about the psychology of affiliation had specific findings for first-born children. First-born children proved to be more anxious and frightened when faced with a standard anxiety provoking situation than later born. When the subjects were presented with the choice, anxious first-born subjects did not chose to be together so frequently. Schacter generalizes that first born seek more help, closer proximity, contact, attention and recognition than later-born children.

Thus, women athletes who are first-born may enter tea, athletics to be with other people, and they do express affiliation as the most enjoyable aspect of athletics for themselves. Whereas in individual athletics there is little contact with people and a lot of practices are done along with no encouragement from other team members and the coach. Team members may be more social-able and the individual athletes may be more isolated.

3. Team Athletics and Individual Athletics

The requirements for team athletics and individual athletics would appear to differ. The individual athlete is, by definition, more of an isolated individual and depends primarily upon his own resources, while the team player must co-operate with his teammates, must respond

to the needs of the group as a whole, and presumably gets a good many rewards from this interaction.

It is interesting to determine the reason why an individual enters team or individual athletics. The researcher tried to assess motives for entry through personality traits of the women athletes.

Personality traits are difficult to assess because of definitional problems and the translation of meanings from different contexts to athletics. In this particular study, however, personality differences between team and individual athletes were significant. The members of specific teams such as volleyball, basketball, and synchronized swimming teams responded differently to the questionnaire than did the individual athletes as what they liked about athletic involvement.

Team athletes (several were involved in team and individual athletics revealed that affiliation was of major importance to them and was their most significant reason for being in athletics. Dayries & Grimm (1970:229) found in comparing team and individual athletes that affiliation was significantly higher in team athletics.

Some team members classified affiliation, winning and excitement as the main reasons for enjoying athletics. Noen of the women athletes interviewed reported that practice was something she liked about being involved in athletics. They saw practice as something they had to do to gain rewards and other satisfaction in athletics.

Edwards (1970:322) found that among a sample of twenty-one females in intercollegiate team and individual athletics, team athletes had higher norms on achievement, autonomy, affiliation, dominance and aggression.

In this study, the participants in individual athletics (speed swimming and track and field) expressed completely different likes about athletics. None liked athletics because of affiliation but a majority responded by saying that "Winning" was what they liked most.

Team athletes have internalized the athletic role but the role system which makes up their personality and the self-concept differs from those of the individual athlete participants. The team athletes are more extroverted. They have entered athletics primarily for social interaction and by expressing affiliation as their major reason for entering and staying in athletics one may infer that they do not participate in athletics for competitive reasons.

Individual athletes entered athletics for the competitiveness--to win. It seems that women athletes involved in individual sports compete against themselves while training and preparing to compete against others in an organized competitive event. They seem to be more introverted, dedicated, disciplined and able to sacrifice other pleasures to practice long hours to prepare to win.

While investigating team and individual athletic participants an interesting factor emerged. It was found

that the women athletes involved in individual athletics were more aware of the characteristics necessary for both team and individual athletic success than were the team participants.

Individual member athletes chose co-operation as the most important characteristic to succeed in team athletic events; after that, communication skills or the ability to get along with other people, and finally, rewards from social interaction. The order of preference was not identical to what the team athletes chose as their main motive for participating in athletics, but affiliation, which team athletes chose first, and co-operation and social interaction, were rated as the most important characteristics for success in a competitive team sport.

The reverse is true of team participants. They did not define the characteristics necessary for success in athletics in the same order of preference prescribed by individual athlete participants.

Four team member participants rated "endurance" as the most important characteristic to succeed in individual sports and three rated a strong interest and endurance as important characteristics to succeed in athletics, but these came later in the preference scale. There were other characteristics the desire to practice long hours, strong-mindedness, self-reliance and the ability to motivate oneself.

The athletic role was internalized as part of the

role learning throughout the process of socialization.

The effects of the athletic role upon the women athlete was internalized as part of the role learning throughout the process of socialization. The effects of the athletic role upon the women athletes' self-concept is a delicate and difficult area to assess. The internalization of an athletic role which is complementary to the masculine role is not expected of females in Western society.

4. Development of the Self-concept of Women Athletes

The development of the self is a significant process occurring during the life of the human individual as he/she continuously attempts to define him/herself and adaptation to his/her contemporaries (Horrocks, 1969:6). Significant figures play a confirming role in the development of the self concept. The family has an influence on the development of the self-concept. With a large majority of the families of the women athletes being involved in athletics there would be a positive effect on the development of the athletic self-concept because the parents themselves found athletics rewarding. At school age the peer group became the significant others and influenced the development of the women athletes self-concept. Thus, in this study the peer group plays an important large part in the individual athletes developing self-concept. Peer relationships are, therefore, particularly important in the formation and maintenance of an identity hierarchy leading to stable yet flexible self meaning (Horrocks,

1969:91).

The evidence supports the importance of peer relations in the incorporation of the athletic role into the self-concept. Peers in elementary school were classmates and neighbours; in high school their peers consisted of some classmates, but in later years, peers were mainly athletic people. At the college level most of the peers were involved in competitive athletics. The athletic peers reinforce and support the athletic role, thus having a positive effect on the self-concept.

When the women athletes were asked, "How do people respond when you tell them you are involved in competitive athletics?", only one negative response was recorded and the remainder either indicated that people approved and encouraged their participation or that they were indifferent.

Some of the responses were as follows:

- K., "My family and friends who are involved in athletics are really happy because they believe athletics keeps you fit both physically and mentally."
- J., "People just say you are involved in athletics--so what?"
- M., "When I tell people that I play basketball at the University of Windsor they really act surprised. They think I am too tiny."
- J., "People don't seem to care when I mention I am in athletics."
- K., "When I was young, people didn't seem to care, but now they show more interest and maybe this is because I am involved at university level."

There were no truly negative responses admitted by women

athletes and thus the possibility of disapproval was avoided, something which might negatively affect their self-concept. The lack of general interest in women's athletics occurs because athletics have been male dominated for so many years. People have been conditioned to see men competing in the area of athletics for hundreds of years and women have been locked into a dependent, non-aggressive, passive role. Even today public institutions actively discriminate against females in respect to facility allocation, funding and programming of sport and fitness activities.

A possible explanation for so much approval of women athletes in this study may be attributed to the fact that as women become more involved in athletics they are more selective in choosing their peers. They choose athletes as peers and interact and associate with them many hours a day; therefore, very little disapproval exists which is mostly evident in the opinion of the general public and non-athletes.

If the cultural roles of women are only supportive and subordinate services in relation to a home and family in present day society, and they choose to become involved in athletics at the competitive level, the potential for role strain is evident. This will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V

MANAGEMENT OF ROLE STRAIN

1. Introduction

Individuals involved in two opposite role situations, such as women athletes who have to be competitive and aggressive in their athletic practices and games and submissive and passive in their social situations, are unable to behave consistently within both sets of role expectations at the same time. Since they are unable to conform completely to both sets of expectations there is potential for role strain.

Pressure may come from a number of sources: the demands and norms of society; opposing evaluations of the actor by others; or from differences between the actor's conception of him/herself and statements about him/herself by others (Biddle & Thomas, 1966:62). Conformity to sex roles demands an individual to fulfill the requirements and norms of our social system.

The basic dilemma confronting women involved in athletics is the incompatible demands and responsibilities arising from the duality of the feminine role and athletic role. The feminine role, which is the central role of women in society, becomes threatened when a non-complementary role such as an athletic role has been assumed and internalized by women athletes.

Role strain according to Goode (1960:483) is defined

as, "the felt difficulty in fulfilling role obligations".

The presence of role strain among women athletes in inter-collegiate athletics was evaluated by asking the following questions: (1) What other alternatives did you have, besides athletics, in high school? (2) Did you at any time feel you had sacrificed anything? (3) Did any of your family, relatives or friends encourage your involvement in athletics? (4) Did any of your family, relatives or friends discourage your involvement in athletics? (5) Is there any specific time in your athletic career that you made a conscious decision to continue in athletics?

There were only a small number who acknowledged the presence of role strain. In response to the above questions only one woman athlete stated that she had an alternative in high school which was to play in the band and thus, she felt she had sacrificed something by being involved in competitive athletics. Another woman athlete said that athletics restricted her social life because a great majority of her time was committed to practice and games. In all cases, the families, relatives and friends encouraged the women athletes to participate and continue their involvement in athletics. There were no reports of any discouragement by important persons in the lives of the women athletes. Only two of the twenty women athletes interviewed reported that they had made a conscious decision to continue at one time in their athletic careers.

Relatively few (2 out of 20) women athletes involved

in competitive athletics experienced role strain or acknowledged its existence due to the incompatibility of the feminine role and athletic role. One of these women athletes was a senior student and the other was a graduate student in the physical education program. Both of these women were involved in team sports.

Those who acknowledged role strain answered the questions on role strain differently than those who did not acknowledge role strain. When asked, "Did you at any time feel that you had sacrificed anything?", those who experienced role strain responded "yes" to this question and provided an explanation. K., a fourth year physical education major, active in two team sports, volleyball and basketball, said that she enjoyed meeting and interacting with people and that it was an important part of staying in athletics. But she also believed she had sacrificed something in being involved in athletics. She said, "In high school I wanted to play in the school band but because athletics with its practice and games, I couldn't do both."

Those who felt no role strain responded by saying that they felt they had sacrificed nothing. D., a fourth year physical education major, born and raised in Toronto and active in speed swimming, said, "When I was younger my whole life was swimming and as I got older it was something to do." B., a first born and an active basketball player said, "Some people in athletics might have felt

they have sacrificed something but I feel athletics has done me more good than harm. I have met all kinds of people and truly enjoyed myself."

When investigating role strain according to the year of study in an academic program, no freshmen, sophomores or juniors admitted to having experienced role strain between the feminine role and athletic role. Only two women athletes acknowledged role strain. It may have been their greater experience that led to their increased awareness. Such findings tentatively confirm the following hypothesis:

Women athletes enrolled in a senior year of graduate program are more likely to acknowledge role strain than women athletes enrolled in a freshman, sophomore or junior year of the academic program.

The following Table VI shows those women who acknowledged role strain. Table VII was coded according to their year of study in an academic program and their type of involvement in athletics, whether team or individual athletic participation. The total sample of women athletes interviewed was twenty.

According to the acknowledgement of role strain in relationship to team and individual participants, two women athletes who reported that they have experienced role strain were team members. One played basketball and the other was on a volleyball team.

2. Management of Role Strain

A key dimension in the study of role strain is aware-

TABLE VI

WOMEN ATHLETES ACKNOWLEDGING ROLE STRAIN
ACCORDING TO THEIR YEAR OF STUDY
IN AN ACADEMIC PROGRAM

N=20

	<u>Sample</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Freshmen	6		XXXXXX
Sophomores	3		XXX
Juniors	4		XXXX
Seniors	5	X	XXXX
Graduates	2	X	X
	<hr/> 20	<hr/> 2	<hr/> 18

TABLE VII

WOMEN ATHLETES ACKNOWLEDGING ROLE STRAIN
ACCORDING TO THEIR TYPE OF ATHLETIC INVOLVEMENT--
TEAM OR INDIVIDUAL PARTICIPANTS

N=20

	<u>Sample</u>	<u>Yes</u>	<u>No</u>
Team Athletic Participants	11	XX	XXXXXXXXXX
Individual Athletic Participants	9		XXXXXXXXXX
	<hr/> 20	<hr/> 2	<hr/> 18

ness. Awareness has to do with the degree with which the individual perceives strain in his/her own role system. Some individuals experience role strain in their role system but do not acknowledge its existence. When such roles as the feminine role, and the athletic role, which is culturally defined as masculine, are not compatible, it may be assumed that role strain is going to be the consequence of learning and internalizing an athletic role by women. The awareness of unawareness of the role strain provides some explanation to the possible types of psychosocial mechanisms that may be used to reduce the role strain and maintain the role system in balance.

The response to such a question as, "Did you at any time feel that you had sacrificed anything?" strongly illustrates the factor of unawareness and awareness. In a study by Newcomb (1943) conducted at Bennington College where a wide range of students were studied to determine the kinds of individuals who have accepted changes with varying willingness or unwillingness, the dimension of awareness and unawareness was examined. He suggests that certain personality factors may be presumed to be associated with awareness. His study was concerned with the awareness of one's own conservatism, and certain other factors associated with a lack of awareness of one's own conservative position. He found that among two groups of conservatives, lack of awareness of conservatism appeared to be simply another facet of the inability of the one group to cope

with the total academic community which was very liberal, whereas the aware group was greater in social skills and higher in ambitions and therefore was more concerned with maintaining relationships in the total academic community. Thus, the unaware group could not cope with two worlds, the college attitudes and values, and their families' attitudes and values.

In this particular study, women athletes who obviously don't conform to their expected feminine roles are exposed to role strain and have several courses of action to follow in dealing with it. Those who cannot face role strain may withdraw from athletics altogether, while those who have participated in athletics up to and including their university years must have other strategies to reduce their role strain and keep their role system in balance.

Awareness is a key factor in being able to utilize a strategy to reduce role strain. The techniques for reducing role strain are those which determine whether or when he/she will leave a role relationship. The women athletes who are aware of the role strain due to the conflict between the feminine and athletic roles may use the method of "Compartmentalization". In other words, they temporarily abdicate one of the conflicting positions and wall themselves off from it, acting as if they were not occupying it, and ignoring the inconsistency of expectations, (Goode, 1960:486). Because only two out of twenty women

revealed that they acknowledged role strain only two women athletes can be said to use the coping strategy of "compartmentalization". These women are aware that the athletic role is not compatible with the feminine role so they use the feminine qualities when they are in a situation which calls for them and the athletic qualities while in practice or participating in competitive athletics. Although the two women athletes who stated that they acknowledged role strain between the athletic and feminine roles were involved in team sports, it cannot be stated that women in team athletics are more aware than women involved in individual sports. A significant factor was the year of study in an academic program with the senior students being more aware than the freshmen, sophomores or juniors.

Another psycho-social mechanism used by women athletes in this study, which is not discussed in the literature, is the "Blocking Out" mechanism. With such a mechanism the women athletes ignore the problem of role strain completely and are probably unaware of role conflict. By using such a mechanism these women athletes can participate in athletics and block out the other role obligations and expectations for the feminine role and vice-versa when they are participating in activities such as call for the feminine role. Probably because women athletes who undertake studying in the physical education program and participate in intercollegiate activities and

interact with such role models as their coaches and athletic peer group, they are more isolated and less aware of role strain.

In an investigation of role strain among women athletes involved in intercollegiate athletics, the self-concept must be examined to see the effects of the role strain upon these women athletes. It is assumed that the self-concept is developed during the socialization process. The self-concept is built up and achieved through accumulated social contacts and experiences with other people. People learn their identity, who and what they are, from the kinds of experiences the growing-up process provides. If women athletes are positively reinforced on a consistent basis for being involved in athletics, they would probably have a positive self-concept, regardless of the negative connotations associated with women's involvement in competitive athletics in our North American Society.

The questions used to evaluate how the women athletes look at themselves, how they see their past, if their present life is meaningful, and what they predict for the future, were as follows: (1) Do women athletes have well-rounded social lives? (2) Do you think women athletes' interaction differs from male athletes? If so, why? (3) Are women athletes involved in athletics any different from women not involved in athletics? (4) Are women athletes more competitive in all aspects of life than women not involved in athletics? (5) Are women athletes leaders

in other activities? (6) How do male athletes view women involved in athletics? (7) What did you like most about athletic involvement? (8) In high school, what did you want to be most of all? Did this aspiration change at any time? If so, state why and when. (9) Being involved in athletics requires many hours of practice; did you mind this? Explain. (10) What do you do in your leisure time? (11) What rewards are there for any successful woman athlete? (12) Are such rewards similar to those of male athletes or do they differ? If so, explain. (13) At this time, what are your possible future plans?

In a majority of cases, the women athletes stated that they had well-rounded social lives and that their interactions with other women athletes were no different than women not involved in athletics. About 50% felt that women in athletics are more competitive than non-athletes in some aspects of life, especially those activities that call for leadership qualities. Most women athletes stated that male athletes were indifferent to their participation in athletics. Several women suggested that male athletes were threatened by their participation and others felt male and female athletes had something in common--athletic competition.

When the women athletes were asked, "What did you like most about athletic involvement?", differences occurred between the team and individual participants. Team athletes liked affiliation and individual athletes

liked winning the most. During their high school years most of the women athletes' career aspirations were for either a teaching or nursing career, while only one of the woman athletes had changed her aspirations and she attributed that to a high school teacher she had admired very much. Only two cases stated that they minded the many hours of practice. One because athletics cut in on her social life and the other had school activities she wanted to undertake at the high school level. Few women stated how they spent their leisure time because most of them stated, "You have got to be kidding; who has any leisure time?" Most of the women athletes interviewed were very aware that there are few rewards for any successful woman athlete and that any monies or scholarships are all allotted to male athletes. In most cases, the women athletes wanted to combine their career with marriage.

Although women athletes are aware of their close and friendly relationships with other women athletes, the fact that they feel they are no different than women who have never competed in athletics suggest a lack of awareness. The lack of awareness is a result of the women athletes' socialization which differed from women non-athletes as was discussed in an earlier chapter. Another interesting factor concerning the self-concept of women athletes is the fact that the career aspirations never changed from elementary school up to and including university

years, except in two cases; one had changed because of her admiration for a particular high school teacher and another had decided to attend graduate school. Most of the women athletes' career aspirations were closely related to the traditional feminine role which has such qualities as caring and guiding. These traditionally feminine careers included nursing, teaching and setting up recreation programs. Most of the women athletes were aware of the limited opportunities for any successful woman athlete and that if they are to continue in athletics they would have to do so through teaching or activities offered in the community. The fact that women athletes do not acknowledge a role strain resulting from non-complementary roles is difficult to explain. Therefore, the following hypothesis cannot be confirmed:

Role strain results from opposite demands made by traditional feminine self-concepts and the athletic self-concept.

Women athletes responded to the questions that evaluated their past, present and future self-concept on an individual and specific basis rather than as women athletes as a distinct majority in North American culture. This may be attributed to their relative isolation and lack of awareness.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSIONS

This particular study investigated the socialization of women into the athletic role. Because this role has been culturally defined as masculine, it was proposed that role strain would take place and this would have specific effects upon the women's self-concept. To test this hypothesis the socialization process of the women athletes, the present attitudes that women athletes held about themselves and how they perceived others' reactions to their participation in competitive athletics and their consequent behaviour was evaluated with the use of an interview schedule. The sample consisted of forty women athletes and twenty women athletes agreed to be interviewed.

In the areas analyzed, not all hypotheses were confirmed. Hypothesis 1 supports the findings that familial interest in athletics showed a consistent positive relationship with all dimensions of athletic involvement. The participation, encouragement and support of women athletes by their families proved to be the most significant factor in explaining the main motives for women to have entered athletics at an early age and remain in athletics up to and including their university years. The parents' and siblings' interest in athletics showed a consistent positive relationship with all dimensions of athletic involvement also. Thus, the following hypothesis was confirmed:

Parental and/or sibling participation in athletics will provide models which influence women's involvement during their childhood socialization.

The social class of the family did not seem to have any particular effect upon the women athletes in this study. The sex of their siblings had no effect upon the women who entered athletics at an early age. But ordinal position seemed to have an effect upon the type of athletics the women entered. There were more first-born in this study than later-born and the first-born had a tendency to enter team athletics presumably for affiliation motives, whereas the majority of later-born entered individual athletics, presumably for competitive motives. The most interesting factor concerning the family in the socialization process of women athletes was the fact that they were involved in the same sport as their father. This may be explained by the fact that the father was interested in them, especially if they were first-born and therefore exposed them to the same athletic activities in which he had experience. Some of the women athletes became involved in other sports but they still participated in the same sport as their fathers throughout their school years and up to and including college years.

Tables III and IV explain the familial participation in athletics. Table III was significant in explaining that the type of reinforcer or social agent contributed to the particular type of athletics women in intercollegiate athletics had chosen. Their fathers were the most

significant social agents in this study in early socialization. Birth order was the only significant variable in Table IV.

The findings proved significant to support the both hypotheses that explained women's entry and influences that kept women involved in athletics. The high school years of the women athletes proved important.

In the senior year of high school most of the peer group consisted of other athletes who were career oriented and were willing to give up friends who were involved in preparing for marriage and motherhood.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is confirmed:

During school age socialization, the presence and association and identification with a well defined peer or reference group will influence involvement in athletics.

Besides the family and the peer group another important factor in women's entering athletics and maintaining participation for a long period may be attributed to a reference group or individual--the most significant being the "coach". In this study the coaches, mainly women, were described as supportive and encouraging in the skill development of women athletes. Although there were various responses of the women athletes about their relationship with their coach, such as friend, sister, mother, they valued the relationship as it had influenced their involvement in athletics. Thus, hypothesis 3 has been confirmed:

Identification with role models will provide encouragement and skill development in childhood socialization.



The results of the findings did not support hypothesis 4. In this study it was assumed that the school was where opportunity structure for athletic participation was found. But according to the data, the opportunity structure was not in the educational system. The following hypothesis was not confirmed:

The facility availability, and the type of reinforcer or social agent, will contribute to the type of athletics women in inter-collegiate athletics have chosen.

There was actually more opportunity available in the family system and in this investigation a large majority of women athletes were presented the opportunity to become involved in athletics because of their parents' and siblings' participation. The father's participation and experience in a certain sport also provided an opportunity for instruction and skill development.

In examining team and individual athletes, Table V illustrates that there were more first-born (12 out of 20) than later-born and first-born were involved in team athletics.

Although role strain exists, theoretically, because the athletic role and the feminine role are non-complementary, the findings did not support such an assumption. So, if no role strain was acknowledged there can be no conclusions drawn about its effects upon the self-concept.

Role strain results from opposite demands made by traditional feminine self-concepts and athletic self-concepts.

The women in the study who acknowledged any role strain are listed in Table VI. Table VII compares women athletes' year of study to their role strain. Those who acknowledged role strain were a senior and a graduate student in physical education programs and members of team athletics. Other findings confirmed that women athletes' year of study was related to the acknowledgement of role strain. Women athletes in senior graduate years of study were the individuals that acknowledged role strain. The hypothesis is thus confirmed:

Women athletes enrolled in a senior year of university are more likely to acknowledge role strain than women enrolled in a freshman, sophomore, or junior year.

Future Research

Whatever theoretical assumptions or myths there are about the restrictions of women in sport, little scientific evidence exists to prove them.

In this particular study there was a need to clarify the theoretical problem of the various role concepts which did not become obvious until after the data was collected and analyzed. Theoretically, it can be assumed that women who don't conform to the stereotypical feminine role will experience an internalized conflict--but to prove this is another matter. Possibly it could be done by examining women's perceptions of women in other aggressive roles such as the professions of medicine, engineering, and law and see how they perceive aggressive competitive behaviour. Role strain may be established in potential

but not in actuality unless women athletes are aware of it. Role strain may be between women athletes own selves and societal expectations. In this study not much awareness of role strain was expressed when the women athletes were asked, "What do you do in your spare time?" The majority of women athletes stated that they had little, if any, spare time, but it may be that they were aware and acknowledged the role overload that exists by their occupying of a large number of roles--the feminine role, the athletic role and the student role. The notion of role strain involves the basic question of psychological discomfort and direct questions should probably be asked.

Although the focused interview used in this study drew out a large amount of information, it is probably necessary to use a more structured interview to draw inferences about behaviour and attitudes, and a larger sample would be necessary to test the reliability of response.

Possibly one should compare women athletes and non-women athletes at the professional level to evaluate differences in role strain. More effective measures of the self-concept should be established. If women's sex role are going to be part of an analysis, a standardized scale of femininity should be used. While such a variable as awareness is being used in this study, better indicators for the level of awareness would have to be established for further research.

APPENDIX I

Forty women athletes were chosen by means of a random number table (Rand, 1955) from the population of inter-collegiate athletes at the University of Windsor.

<u>TEAM ATHLETES</u>		<u>INDIVIDUAL ATHLETES</u>	
Synchronized Swimming	3	Speed Swimming	6
Basketball	11	Track & Field	8
Volleyball	12		
	<u>26</u>		<u>14</u>

APPENDIX II

Questionnaire

Background Questions:

- (1) Where were you born and raised?
- (2) What is your father's occupation?
What education does your father have?
- (3) What is your mother's occupation?
What education does your mother have?
- (4) How many children are in your family?
Using first names, would you please state their age and sex.
- (5) Were either or both of your parents involved in athletics in the past? If so, please state when and what type of athletics they were involved in.
- (6) Have either or both parents continued athletic involvement to present date? If so, please state what type of athletics they are involved in presently.
- (7) Are any of your brothers and sisters involved in athletics? If so, please state what type of athletics they are involved in and the length of time of their involvement in athletics.
- (8) At what age would you say you became involved in athletics?

Elementary School:

- (1) How did you get along with your schoolwork?
- (2) What was your parents' attitude towards your schoolwork?
- (3) If you can recall, who were your friends in elementary school? And, how did they come to be your friends?
- (4) Were you involved in any athletic activities while you were in elementary school? If so, please state.

(5) In elementary school, what did you want to be most of all?

(6) Did you have any hobbies? If so, please state.

High School:

(1) Who were your friends and what were their interests?

(2) Did your group of friends change at any time during your high school years? If so, why and when.

(3) Being involved in athletics requires many hours of practice; did you mind this?

(4) What did you like most about athletic involvement?

(5) (a) Did you, at any time, feel that you had sacrificed anything?

(b) Was there any time during high school that you recall that any of your friends dropped out of athletics? If so, would you state some possible reasons for leaving athletics.

(6) In high school, what did you want to be most of all? Did this aspiration change at any time? If so, state why and when.

(7) What other alternatives did you have besides athletics in high school?

(8) Who were your heroes in your high-school years?

(9) In high school, were you involved in any extra-curricular activities? If so, state.

(10) How would you describe your relationship with your family while in high school?

College:

(1) Who are your friends and what are their interests (use first names)?

(2) At present, are you involved in intercollegiate athletics? If so, state.

(3) What is your academic major?

(4) What do you do in your leisure time?

- (5) How often do you see your parents?
- (6) How often do you see your relatives?
- (7) At this time, what are your possible future plans?

Personal Opinions: .

- (1) Using a specific sport, describe a female athlete.
- (2) Using a specific sport, describe a male athlete.
- (3) How would you describe the female athletes' relationship with their coach?
- (4) How would you describe the male athletes' relationship with their coach?
- (5) What do you feel are the characteristics necessary to success in a team sport?
- (6) What do you feel are the characteristics necessary to succeed in individual athletics?
- (7) Are there "loners" in athletics? If so, why?
- (8) How important is getting along in team athletics?
- (9) How do male athletes view females involved in athletics?
- (10) How do people respond when you tell them you are involved in intercollegiate athletics?
- (11) How does society define the athletic role? Do you feel that such a definition is appropriate to the role?
- (12) How does society define the feminine role? Do you feel that such a definition is appropriate to the role?
- (13) Was it easy for you to become involved in athletics?
- (14) Do female athletes have well-rounded social lives?
- (15) Did any of your friends or relatives discourage your involvement in athletics?
- (16) Did any of your friends or relatives encourage your involvement in athletics?
- (17) How do male athletes get along with each other?

- (18) How do female athletes get along with each other?
- (19) What do you think were the major influences which got you involved in athletics?
- (20) What other athletics are you involved in or can you play?
- (21) Is there any specific time in your sports career that you made a conscious decision to continue your involvement in athletics?
- (22) What kind of personality traits do you need to be a team player?
- (23) What kind of personality traits do you need to be an individual player?
- (24) Do you think female athletes interaction differs from male athletes? If so, why?
- (25) How specialized are female athletes in particular athletics?
- (26) Do you think a certain type of athletics demands a particular type of personality? If so, please explain.
- (27) Do people with aggressive personalities tend to become involved in athletics?
- (28) Does participation in athletics develop aggression?
- (29) How do you think society expects females to act?
- (30) Are females involved in athletics any different from females not involved in athletics?
- (31) Are female athletes more competitive in all aspects of life than females non-involved in athletics?
- (32) Are female athletes leaders in other activities?
- (33) What rewards are there for any successful female athlete?
- (34) Are such rewards similar to those of males or do they differ? If so, explain.

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